

absolute india

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Covid victims entitled to ex gratia, issue guidelines in 6 weeks: SC

COMPENSATION COMPULSORY

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said the Centre failed to perform its statutory duty, under Section 12 of the Disaster Management Act (DMA), to issue minimum standards of relief for families of those people who lost their lives to Covid-19. It directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to recommend guidelines for ex gratia assistance, on account of loss of life, to families concerned, within 6 weeks.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A bench comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan and M.R. Shah said: If the statutory authority has failed to perform its statutory duty under the statute or constitutional duty, the court would be absolutely justified in issuing a writ of mandamus directing the authority to perform its statutory duty. The Centre had argued that the term "shall" used in Section 12 of the DMA, will have to be read as "may", thereby making the provision directory/discretionary and not mandatory, in the light of peculiar facts and comprehensive steps taken by the government in mitigating the pandemic.

Contesting the ex gratia, it argued that funds have been sanctioned for creating infrastructure, hospitals, testing, vaccination, ICU facilities and other allied matters including providing food to the BPL/migrant labourers, and not to pay ex gratia assistance.

However, the bench, in its 66-page judgment, held: "The beneficial provision of the legislation must be literally construed so as to fulfil the statutory purpose and not to frustrate it."

It observed if Centre were to construe the word "shall" as "may", in the act, it would "defeat its purpose" and object to issue guidelines for minimum standards of relief, including ex-gratia assistance in the Covid-19 pandemic, which is a disaster.



CONSIDER FINANCE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON COVID RELIEF

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Centre to take appropriate steps on the recommendations made by the Finance Commission in its 15th report regarding social security and welfare measures in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic. The bench noted that the commission has also suggested the Centre launch a national insurance scheme for disaster related deaths in India which will not only be able to work as a social protection scheme but will also not increase the administrative burden on the government.

PROVIDE OPT OUT OPTION TO COVID-HIT CA CANDIDATES

In a major relief to aspirants, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to provide "opt out" option to a candidate in the CA exams scheduled from July 5, on account of Covid-related difficulties faced by them or their family members. The bench added that this will not be considered as an attempt in the examination as such, and such candidate will be permitted to appear in the follow up (back up) examination, to be conducted for the old as well as new syllabus, subject to conducive situation prevailing at the relevant time. The bench observed that for candidates affected due to lockdown during the relevant period of examination, it has been informed that the scheme itself provides that such candidate will be entitled to opt out and will not be treated as an attempt. That candidate would be permitted to appear in the back up examination, to be conducted by the Institute in due course, it added. It directed the ICAI to permit such candidate to opt-out in case, of last-minute change of examination centre, which will not be treated as an attempt in the examination and such candidate shall be permitted to appear in the back-up examination, to be conducted by the Institute at appropriate time, when the situation is conducive in that regard.

Brazil Suspends \$300M Covaxin Contract

SAO PAULO | Agencies

In a major blow to Bharat Biotech's plan to market Covaxin abroad, the Brazilian government on Tuesday suspended its contract to import 20 million doses of the vaccine in a \$300-million deal with the Indian company. With the growing scandal around the contract closing in on Jair Bolsonaro, the Brazilian government is now in a complete damage-control mode to save the president's skin in a multimillion-dollar case which is keeping this country fixated to TV news.

In a development on Tuesday evening that was not completely unexpected, Brazil's minister of health Marcelo Queiroga announced that the government has "decided to suspend the contract on the recommendation of the federal comptroller general (CGU)", which is investigating the alleged irregularities in the contract. After examining the entire contract, which may take 10 to 15 days, CGU will decide whether to terminate the contract or not. But in the views of senators leading the parliamentary commission of inquiry (CPI), the contract is



as good as dead.

The contract between Brazil and Bharat Biotech, mediated and signed by a local company called Precisa Medicamentos, has been in

the eye of a political storm for days as it became the main target of the parliamentary commission of inquiry (CPI) investigating the government's handling of the pan-

COVAXIN EFFECTIVELY NEUTRALISES ALPHA, DELTA VARIANTS

Washington: Covaxin's Covid-19 jab, developed and manufactured by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech, generates antibodies that can effectively neutralise the Alpha (B117) and Delta (B1617) variants of SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing Covid-19, the US National Institutes of Health has said citing results from two studies of blood serum from people who received the shots. Covaxin comprises a disabled form of SARS-CoV-2 that cannot replicate but still stimulates the immune system to make antibodies against the virus. The NIH said an adjuvant, developed by the agency, has also contributed to the success of the highly efficacious Covaxin Covid-19 vaccine, which roughly 25 million people have received to date in India and elsewhere. Adjuvants are substances formulated as part of a vaccine to boost immune responses and enhance a vaccine's effectiveness.

NOT RECEIVED ANY ADVANCE PAYMENTS: BHARAT BIOTECH

New Delhi: After Brazil announced suspending a \$324 million Covaxin contract that has mired President Jair Bolsonaro in accusations of irregularities, Bharat Biotech has said it has not received any advance payments nor supplied any vaccines. "During the past few weeks, there have been reports in the media at large misrepresenting the procurement process of COVAXIN, in Brazil and other countries," Bharat Biotech said. Bharat Biotech said "EUA was received on 4th June 2021. As of 29th June 2021, Bharat Biotech has not received any advance payments nor supplied any vaccines to MOH Brazil".

Indonesia begins inoculating pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, kids

JAKARTA | Agencies

Indonesia has launched a Covid-19 vaccination program for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and children aged 12 to 18, Vice President Ma'ruf Amin announced here.

Since the entry of the more contagious Delta variant, the number of Covid-19 infected children in the Southeast Asian country has increased by 12.5 per cent, according to data provided by the Indonesian Pediatrician Association. Indonesia's national agency of drug and food control BPOM recently allowed the emergency use of the Covid-19 vaccine for children aged 12 to 17 at a



medium dose. Meanwhile, the Indonesian association of obstetrics and gynecology POGI recommended Covid-19 vaccination for pregnant women, especially those with high risk of being exposed.

In a statement on June 26, President Joko Widodo had announced that Indonesia has set a target of administering two million doses of the Covid-19 vaccine daily in August in efforts to curb the surge in the number of new cases.

3 TERRORISTS GUNNED DOWN IN KULGAM ENCOUNTER

SRINAGAR | Agencies

One more terrorist has been killed in an ongoing encounter between militants and security forces in the Chimmer area in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Wednesday, taking the toll of terrorists killed to three, officials said. "One more unidentified terrorist has been killed in the Kulgam encounter. Search is going on," the police said.

The firefight between the terrorists and the security forces started after a joint team of the police and the army cordoned off the area and launched a search operation on the basis of specific information about the presence of terrorists there. As the security forces zeroed in on the spot where the terrorists were hiding, they came under a heavy volume of fire that triggered the encounter. A search operation is currently underway in the area.

Remove all 'pornographic, obscene' content in 1 week: NCW to Twitter

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Taking suo moto cognisance of pornographic content on Twitter, the National Commission for Women (NCW) on Wednesday directed the micro-blogging platform to remove "all pornographic and obscene" content within a week while instructing Delhi Police to investigate and take appropriate legal action.

The NCW move comes a day after Delhi Police registered a case against Twitter for child pornographic content following a complaint by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). The police action was taken amid ongoing tussle between the Centre and Twitter over the new IT rules and according to officials the NCPCR complaint pertains to alleged display of child pornographic content on the social media site. NCW Chairperson Rekha



Sharma wrote to Twitter India's Managing Director Manish Maheshwari for immediate removal of all such pornographic and obscene content from Twitter platform within a week. She also wrote to Delhi Police Commissioner to investigate and take appropriate legal action in the matter. The statement further said that the Commission has shared with Twitter details of few profiles sharing pornographic content on Twitter and has directed to remove all such content within one week. "The platform has also been asked to communicate action taken within 10 days."

RUPEE WEAKENS FURTHER AMID STRONG DOLLAR, RISING OIL PRICES

Mumbai: The Indian rupee continued to depreciate on Wednesday amid a strengthening dollar across currencies globally. The rupee ended at 74.32 per dollar on Wednesday, weakening by 9 paise from its previous close.

Rahul Gupta, Head Of Research (Currency), Emkay Global Financial Services, said: "The rupee is on an edge, for which the greater sensitivity probably lies towards stronger US data and a stronger dollar." Along with the strengthening dollar, persistent rise in crude oil prices has also impacted the Indian currency. The August contract of Brent crude oil in the intercontinental exchange is currently at \$75.19, higher by 0.58 per cent from its previous close. Meanwhile, the Indian equity market ended on a subdued note after a positive start. The BSE Sensex closed at 52,482.71, lower by 66.95 points or 0.13 per cent from its previous close.



FARMERS' BODY PLANS TO CONTEST UP POLLS



Lucknow: The Rashtriya Kisan Manch on Wednesday said it will make one crore new members in the next three months and will field candidates in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls. Farmers will get their rights only when they enter the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, said Kisan Manch national president Shekhar Dixit while addressing the working committee meeting of the organisation's Uttar Pradesh unit. "The organisation has embarked on a membership drive and in the next three months, we have plans to make one crore new members. The Manch will be field candidates on all 403 Assembly constituencies in the 2022 elections," Dixit said. He added that the current BJP government is working against interests of farmers and for the benefit of the capitalists. "Time has come to remove the anti-farmer governments and install one, in which reins of power are in the hands of farmers. Farmers should step into the electoral arena and make the political parties realise about their strength," Dixit said.

SBI revised service charges; key changes from today

Beginning July 1, a host of new rules and changes will come into effect ranging from new TDS rules to a possible hike in LPG cylinder prices to the State Bank of India's revised service charges, impacting the common man in various ways. The Finance Act 2021 has amended rules relating to tax deducted at source (TDS), which will come into effect from July 1. Under the new guidelines, people who have not deposited income tax returns (ITR) for the previous two years will be subject to a higher TDS.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

State Bank of India (SBI) has revised service charges for Basic Savings Bank Deposit (BSBD) account holders that will come into effect from July 1. "The new charges would apply to ATM withdrawals, cheque book, transfer and other non-financial transactions," the bank said on its website.

Charges will be levied after four free cash withdrawals (including at ATM and branch) in a month. Subsequently, a Rs 15 plus GST will be charged at all SBI and non-SBI ATMs.

LPG PRICE MAY INCREASE

Oil companies may revise the prices of LPG cylinders from July 1. These rates are updated on the 1st of every month. At present, the price of a 14.2 KG LPG cylinder, which is commonly used in our households, is Rs 809 in Delhi.



NEW TDS RULES

Finance Act, 2021 has inserted two new sections 206AB and 206CCA which mandates tax deduction (206AB) or tax collection (206CCA) at a higher rate in the case of specified persons with respect to tax deductions (other than under sections 192, 192A, 194B, 194BB, 194LBC, and 194N) and tax collections.

If a TDS of Rs 50,000 or more has been made for the past two years but no return of income has been filed, the rate of TDS will be double the specified rate or five per cent, whichever is higher.

However, this provision will not be applicable for the transactions where the full amount of tax is required to be deducted, e.g. salary income, payment to a non-resident, lottery, etc. Also, the specified persons will not include a non-resident who does not have a permanent establishment in India.



DHANKHAR OPENS FRESH BATTLE WITH BENGAL SPEAKER

Team Absolute | Kolkata

Days after West Bengal Speaker Biman Banerjee complained of "excessive interference" of the Governor in matters related to parliamentary democracy and functioning of the House to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar shot off a letter to Banerjee terming his allegations as "unfortunate" and "distanced from reality".

Dhankhar in an official statement said, "Such stand, more so in the forum concerned, is not in consonance with the office you hold. Just ponder that not even once you have thought of deliberating the issue, if at all any, with me. Such optics damage the institution we need to nurture and of which I happen to be at the apex as per Article 168 of the Constitution." Referring to the two Bills that Banerjee alleged the Governor was sitting on, Dhankhar strongly objected saying, "The Dunlop India (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertaking) Bill 2016 which was forwarded to the Governor of West Bengal on 2 March, 2016 was forwarded by my predecessor in terms of



Article 201 of Constitution on 10 March, 2016 to the Hon'ble President of India who, after receiving appropriate feedback from the concerned Department and the Chief Secretary, Govt of West Bengal, on 15.01.2019 withheld his consent to the said Bill." Accordingly, the Home Ministry, Govt of India informed the concerned Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises & Industrial Reconstruction, Govt of West Bengal that the Hon'ble President has withheld his consent to the

Bill determining matter in finality as per Article 201 of the Constitution. There was thus constitutional quietus to the bill even before I assumed office. It is unfortunate and regrettable that even in the face of such a glaring situation you chose to engage in optical misrepresentation and that too without even once advertising to me," he added.

"Regarding the West Bengal (Prevention of Lynching) Bill 2019, after the same was received by the Governor,

comprehensive joint representation in respect of the same was received from the then Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Left Front Legislative party in the Assembly raising inter alia serious procedural lapses. At the same time the Home & Hill Affairs Department dealing with the matter informed that there were certain mistakes in section 7C of the Bill in respect of which the Law Department was asked to brief the Governor," he said. Forwarding the same letter to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha to set the record right, Dhankhar alleged, "Constrained to invite your attention that on numerous occasions as a consequence of your actions the dignity of the office of Governor was compromised. All were shocked when on a notified visit, I found the Assembly gate locked. On my subsequent visit to the Assembly, your absence was felt. Blacking out from media coverage the Governor's Address under Article 176 of the Constitution was reminiscent of draconian emergency, as subsequent to that there was live coverage of the proceedings concerning Hon'ble Chief Minister and Hon'ble Finance Minister as also others".

NIA nabs 2 LeT terrorists for planning explosion in running train

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) said on Wednesday that it has arrested two Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists from Hyderabad, who had planned an explosion in a running passenger train on the instructions of Pakistan-based handlers, in connection with its probe into the bomb blast in Bihar's Darbhanga railway station on June 17.

An NIA spokesperson said that the agency has arrested Imran Malik aka Imran Khan and Mohammad Nasir Khan aka Nasir Malik, both of whom were staying in Nampally in Hyderabad district. The duo originally hails from Shamli district in Uttar Pradesh.

The case pertains to the explosion of a parcel at the Darbhanga railway station on June 17. The parcel was booked at Secunderabad and had arrived by the Secunderabad-Darbhanga Express.

The NIA had taken over the



probe on June 24. The official said that after visiting the scene of crime and based on the inputs received by the investigating team of the NIA, the accused persons mentioned above were arrested from Hyderabad.

The official said that preliminary investigation has revealed a transnational conspiracy hatched by top operatives of the proscribed terror outfit LeT to execute terror acts across India and cause large scale damage to life and property.

Amul hikes milk prices for first time in one and half years

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), marketer of milk and milk products under the brand name of Amul, has decided to revise the milk prices by Rs 2 per litre in markets of Ahmedabad and Saurashtra of Gujarat and Delhi NCR with effective from July 1.

In Ahmedabad, the price of Amul Gold will be Rs 29 per 500 ml, Amul Taaza will be Rs 23 per 500 ml, and Amul Shakti will be at Rs 26 per 500ml. The increase of Rs 2 per litre translates into 4 per cent increase in MRP which is much lower than average food inflation. The price revision is being done all India, in rest of the markets where Amul is marketing its fresh milk.

In the last 1.5 years, Amul has not made any price revision in its fresh milk category.

Amul said since then due to rise in costs of energy, packaging, logistics, overall cost of operation has increased. Considering the rise in input costs, its member unions have also increased farmers' price in the range of



Rs 45 to Rs 50 per kg fat which is more than 6 per cent over previous year.

SIDHU FINALLY MEETS RAHUL GANDHI

New Delhi | Agencies

New Delhi: Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu, who has raised the banner of revolt against Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, met former party chief Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday evening soon after meeting party General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. The meeting lasted for an hour but Sidhu, who had tweeted his photo with Priyanka Gandhi, was tight-lipped about what transpired, and neither did the Congress make an official statement. Sources, however, that a solution is being worked on to defuse the tension between the two factions.

Ahead of the meeting with Sidhu, Rahul Gandhi had met Priyanka Gandhi and party chief Sonia Gandhi.

The cricketer-turned-politician's meeting with Rahul Gandhi came a day after the former party chief had said that no meeting was scheduled between him and Sidhu. On Tuesday afternoon, Rahul Gandhi stepped outside his house to talk to reporters but when he was asked about meeting Sidhu, he seemed to rule it out. "No meeting," he had said.

Last week, Punjab Congress President Sunil Jakhar, Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal and MPs Pratap Singh Bajwa and Manish Tewari had met Rahul Gandhi and apprised him of the situation after infighting escalated in the state unit.



Arrest RSS leader in graft case: Raj Cong chief

JAIPUR | Agencies

The President of Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee (RPCC), Govind Singh Dotsra, on Wednesday demanded the arrest of senior RSS leader Nimbaram -- who is allegedly involved in a graft case for demanding Rs 20 crore as 'commission' from a firm appointed for door-to-door garbage collection here.

Hitting back at Dotsra, the BJP said that targeting the RSS will cost the state government dearly, and warned the Congress government to stop working outside the purview of law to please its 'masters' sitting in Delhi as 'governments' keep changing. The Anti-Corruption



Bureau (ACB) had on Tuesday arrested suspended Jaipur Greater Municipality (JGM) Mayor and BJP leader Somya Gurjar's husband Rajaram Gurjar and a representative of the BVG Company on corruption charges. The case was registered after an investigation was carried out on the basis of a video clip that went viral on social media, in which

Rajaram Gurjar and the company representative were allegedly seen engaged in a conversation related to the Rs 20 crore 'commission' from the firm for getting its payment released from the JGM.

In the purported video, RSS regional pracharak Nimbaram can also be seen sitting with them. On Wednesday, Dotsra demanded the arrest of Nimbaram, claiming that the BJP and the RSS have been fully exposed.

The ACB has registered a graft case against Rajaram, Nimbaram and company representatives Omkar Sapre and Sandeep, after investigating the video clip that was sent for examination to two laboratories, which confirmed that these were not doctored.

UP panchayat decrees 5 shoe-slaps & Rs 50K fine for

GORAKHPUR | Agencies

Avillage panchayat in Maharajganj district recently asked a minor girl to settle her rape case for Rs 50,000 and five slipper slaps to the accused.

The girl's family declined to accept the panchayat decision and contacted the police, after which a case of molestation was filed. SP Maharajganj, on Tuesday, directed the police to record the girl's statement under section 164 of CrPc and get her medically examined.

According to reports said that the girl's mother, a resident of a locality under Kothibhar police circle, lodged a complaint with the village panchayat that their minor daughter had been raped by a village youth.

Acting on the complaint, the panchayat, on June 23, asked the girl to



take Rs 50,000 from the accused and slap him five times with a slipper in front of the panchayat members to settle the issue.

However, the girl's family refused to accept the decision and contacted the Kothibhari police on June 24.

On the family's complaint, an FIR was lodged under IPC section of molestation and POCSO Act against the accused.

The family later made the panchayat decision viral on social media, after which Maharajganj SP Pradeep Gupta directed the police to get the girl medically examined and also record her statement under Section 164 of CrPc. The SP told reporters, "If rape is reported in the medical test, a case will be registered under the related sections and action will be taken accordingly."

Fake currency found in RBI chest, FIR lodged



Lucknow | Agencies

An FIR has been lodged at the Mahanagar police station here after the recovery of fake currency notes in the currency chest of the Reserve Bank of India.

Mohit Priyadarshi, assistant manager, Reserve Bank of India, Gomti Nagar, informed the police that 44 fake currency notes (one in the denomination of Rs 20 and remaining of Rs 100) were found in the bank's currency chest in Mahanagar in

April-May this year.

He said the circulation/printing of fake currency was a serious offence and required police action. He said that the police could send fake currency notes to the currency printing press or forensic lab for investigation. He also submitted the fake currency notes and its details to the police. Last year, another bank had lodged an FIR stating that demonetized currency worth Rs 1.5 crore was found in the bank's chest.

Bengaluru riots case: NIA arrests key conspirator after 10 months

Bengaluru | Agencies

After over 10 months, the National Investigation Agency arrested the key conspirator for his alleged role in the Bengaluru riots case.

According to an NIA statement, the accused is named Syed Abbas, (38), resident of Govindpura in Bengaluru. Abbas is Nagawara block president of the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI).

The NIA stated that its investigations had revealed that the accused Abbas was absconding till date since the riots broke out in Kadagondana Halli police limits in August 2020. "He along with other conspirators were actively involved in setting vehicles on fire besides ransacking as well as setting KG Halli police station on fire apart from attacking police officers on duty," said the statement.

The NIA added that these conspirators had



hurled petrol bombs on police stations as well as policemen on duty and after this case was handed over to the NIA as many as 138 persons were arrested in this connection. In August 2020, Pulikeshi Nagar Congress MLA Akhanda Srinvasa Murthy's

nephew Naveen Kumar (who is out on bail now) posted an insidious post on his Facebook timeline. Furious over the post, a section of residents approached KG Halli police and DJ Police to initiate action against Naveen. With the police reportedly dilly dallying over initiating action on Naveen, the mob went berserk and indulged in arson and looting. In a bid to control the raging mob, the police had to open fire, killing four persons on August 11, 2020. Prior to police opening fire, the mob had not only set the MLA's house on fire besides torching several vehicles parked in KG Halli and DJ Halli police stations but also allegedly hurled petrol bombs on KG Halli police station. Following these riots, in November 2020, the NIA had conducted widespread searches on 43 locations including four offices of SDPI and PFI. The NIA had claimed that it had recovered incriminating evidence as well as lethal weapons like swords, knives and iron rods.

Two former JD-U legislators set to join RJD

PATNA | Agencies

Two former MLAs of Bihar's ruling Janata Dal-United have announced that they will join the Rashtriya Janata Dal.

Manjeet Singh, who was one of the youth leaders closest to Nitish Kumar, announced that he will join the RJD on July 3.

Maheshwar Singh also announced he would join the RJD. Manjeet Singh had recently met RJD leader Tejaswini Yadav in former CM Rabri Devi's residence. Manjeet Singh and Maheshwar Singh were MLAs in the past but the JD-U had denied tickets to them in 2020 Assembly election with their seats going to the BJP as per the



coalition pact. Both of them had contested the election as Independent candidates but lost. However, Manjeet Singh cut the vote share of BJP and its candidate was defeated by the RJD candidate. Since the formation of a coalition government comprising four political parties, the RJD claims that they are in contact with several leaders of the JD-U and Nitish Kumar government may fall soon. On the other hand, the JD-U and the BJP are also claiming the same in a bid to weaken the RJD.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ratnabai, mother of Army No. 14839304L, Rank SEP/MT Name Ghodapkar Arvind Vasudev Unit 5221-A.S.C. BN, C/o 56 APO C. Coy, residing at : Room no. 7 Chawl no. 2 Navjeevan Society, Reti Bandar Cross Road, Umesh Nagar, Dombivli (W) Kalyan, Thane (Maharashtra) PIN-421202. I have changed my name Ratnabai to Ratnabai Vasudev Ghodapkar vide affidavit no. AY751816 Dated 30.06.2021 before Bhopal Court Madhya Pradesh.

CHANGE IN DATE OF BIRTH

I, Ratnabai, mother of Army No. 14839304L, Rank SEP/MT Name Ghodapkar Arvind Vasudev Unit 5221-A.S.C. BN, C/o 56 APO C. Coy, residing at : Room no. 7 Chawl no. 2 Navjeevan Society, Reti Bandar Cross Road, Umesh Nagar, Dombivli (W) Kalyan, Thane (Maharashtra) PIN-421202. I have changed my date of birth 01.07.1958 to 01.02.1950 vide affidavit no. AY751814 Dated 30.06.2021 before Bhopal Court Madhya Pradesh.



MP GOVT MUST PAY EX-GRATIA OF RS 5 LAKH TO KIN OF DECEASED COVID PATIENTS: KAMAL NATH

Team Absolute | Bhopal

After the Supreme Court pronounced an order to ensure compensation to the families of those who lost their lives due to Covid-19 infection, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and Congress State President, Kamal Nath, has demanded the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in the state give Rs five lakh as compensation to grieving families of those people who succumbed to the infection.

Nath released a statement, saying, "The Supreme Court has ordered the Central government to ensure compensation to the families of the deceased Covid patients. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has been given six weeks time to decide the compensation. The apex court's decision once again shows the failure of the Narendra Modi government. It should have been that the government as an executive should have fulfilled its responsibility and the judi-



ary would not have stepped in to pass its judgement."

Kamal Nath has demanded that the Central government should provide a compensation of at least Rs four lakh to the next of kin of the persons who died in a natural calamity, as there is already a provision of giving a compensation of Rs four lakh. Whatever formula the NDMA comes up with, this fact should be kept in mind.

The Madhya Pradesh government has already announced a compensation of Rs one lakh to the family of the person who died of Covid-19. The Central and state government together

should ensure to give at least Rs five lakh to the family of every person who died of the infection in Madhya Pradesh.

Accusing the state government of hiding the figures of the Covid deaths, the former Chief Minister said in Madhya Pradesh it is being seen that the state government is deliberately fudging the data of Covid-19 deaths. This has been published within the country and international media outlets showing that the state government has accepted deaths of fewer people from Covid than the number of people who have actually died in the state.

Chief Minister Chouhan dedicates Kala Panchang

Programme of all cultural and tourism activities to be held in state till March 2022 released

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday dedicated the Kala Panchang published by the Culture Department at his residence. Tourism, Culture and Spirituality Minister Usha Thakur and Principal Secretary Culture and Public Relations Sheo Shekhar Shukla were also present on the occasion. Thakur presented a book titled 'Bundelkhand ke Bitti Chitra' (Mural Paintings of Bundelkhand) to Chief Minister Chouhan. Shukla informed that in the Kala Panchang, all the activities to be conducted by the Culture and Tourism Department in the coming months of the year have been included. The Panchang includes the activities from April 2021 to March 2022.

It is noteworthy that the Department of Culture organises activities such as celebrations, exhibi-



tions, training camps, awards, symposiums, seminars, lectures, poetry, stories, films, plays, literature readings etc. in the entire state. Kala Panchang is published by the department for the purpose of giving timely information about all such activities organised during the year. This effort is for the conven-

ience of art enthusiasts, scholars, experts, trainees, artists, journalists, critics, dignitaries and those interested in these activities. This is a two-and-a-half-decade-old tradition. The total of activities carried out by different academies and directorates throughout the year ranges from about 1500 to 2000.

About 30 new activities have been added by the department. The activities carried out under the Amrit Mahotsav of Independence have also been included in this.

The Kala Panchang has been published with the hope that the country will be free from the crisis of Corona epidemic and cultural activities will be organised as before. If the activities cannot be conducted physically then efforts will be made to organise the events online. The Kala Panchang for the year 2021-22 portrays the Madhya Pradesh tribes' attachment to the nature. The cover page of the Panchang has a painting of Karma dance by Kalabai Shyam. Along with this, the Panchang is adorned with the depictions of Bhuri Bai, Nanku Siya Shyam, Lado Bai, Durgabai, Narmada Prasad Tekam and Ram Singh. An attempt has been made to give this message through Panchang that we should try to restore the nature around us.

Bodies of five missing members of family exhumed from field

When the cops dug eight feet under the ground, they found five decomposed bodies in separate graves. None of them had clothes. The police have arrested six accused in the case.

Team Absolute | Dewas

Bodies of five members of a family who had gone missing over a month ago were exhumed from a field in Dewas. All five were strangled to death and were dumped in a 8 to 10 feet deep pit that was dug in advance.

The police had to use an earth-mover to dig out the bodies.

45-year-old Mamta, her two daughters (21-year-old Rupali and 14-year-old Divya) and two teen cousins of the daughters had gone missing from their home in Dewas on May 13, the police said.

Their landlord, who was in a relationship with one of the victims, and a dozen of his accomplices are behind this horror, the police said. The main accused, Surendra Rajput, and four other suspects have been arrested. The police are looking for seven others.

When the cops dug eight feet under the ground, they found five decomposed bodies in separate graves. None of them had clothes. The accused had stripped them and burnt the clothes. The accused had covered the bodies with salt and urea to ensure they are decomposed. "Six people, including Surendra Chouhan, have been arrested. While Chouhan planned and executed the murders, the five others helped him in digging the pits in which the victims

were buried," Dewas police officer Shiv Dayal Singh said.

The family had lodged a missing person complaint and efforts were on to trace them even as the killers tried to mislead the police by posting messages on social media sites through the ID of the woman's elder daughter. The messages claimed that Rupali had got married according to her wishes and that her younger sister, two cousins and her mother were with her, and were safe.

The police tracked the mobile phone of Rupali and from her call details, realised that she was in constant touch with their home owner. The home owner was questioned by the police but evaded questions over his relationship with the young woman. The police kept a watch on him and found that he was in constant touch with five others on May 13. The five were separately questioned and the police managed to extract a lead that took the investigators to the field where the bodies had been buried.

CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO DADA BHAI NAOROJI

Bhopal: Chief Minister

Shivraj Singh Chouhan paid tributes to Dada bhai Naoroji on his death anniversary here on Wednesday. Late i Naoroji is known as 'The Grand Old Man of India'. Chouhan garlanded the portrait of Dada bhai Naoroji at his residence. Dada bhai Naoroji played an important role in the independence of India. Dada bhai Naoroji is one of the founders of political and social leadership in India. He caught the evils of the colonial administration. He was an intellectual, educationist, economist, devoted nationalist, social reformer and a teacher. Dada bhai Naoroji, Dinesh Edulji Vacha and AO Huryum was involved in the formation of the Indian National Congress. He was instrumental in the establishment of several organizations such as the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay and the East Indian Association in London. He was the first Indian to become a member of the British Parliament. He served as Member of Parliament in the United Kingdom, the House of Commons as a member of the Liberal Party. Dada bhai Naoroji died on June 30, 1917.



WOMAN'S BODY FOUND IN BATHROOM, SUSPECT HUSBAND MISSING

According to information received, a complaint was filed with the police after the couple's neighbours found a foul smell emanating from their house at Ganpati Homes in Ayodhya Nagar.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The body of a woman has been found in the bathroom of a house in the state capital Bhopal and according to the police she

was reportedly murdered three days ago allegedly by her husband. The woman's husband has been missing since the incident. It is suspected that the husband may have killed his wife which the police is investigating. According to information received, a complaint was filed with the police after the couple's neighbours found a foul smell emanating from their house at Ganpati Homes in Ayodhya Nagar.

The main suspect Prashant Patel lived with his wife Rakhi Patel along with their son and daughter in the house. The police broke open the lock of the house and found the body of a woman lying in the bathroom. The deceased was identified as Rakhi Patel.



श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी
प्रधानमंत्री



डॉक्टर्स डे

संवाद एवं सम्मान

01 जुलाई 2021, सुबह 10:30 बजे
मिंटो हॉल, भोपाल

चिकित्सकों के साथ
मुख्यमंत्री जी करेंगे
संवाद



श्री शिवराज सिंह चौहान
मुख्यमंत्री

मुख्य अतिथि
माननीय श्री शिवराज सिंह चौहान
मुख्यमंत्री, मध्यप्रदेश

विशेष अतिथि
श्री विश्वास कैलाश सारंग
मंत्री, चिकित्सा शिक्षा विभाग एवं
डॉ. प्रभुराम चौधरी
मंत्री, लोक स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग

कोरोना काल में सेवाएं देने वाले चिकित्सकों को मुख्यमंत्री जी द्वारा डिजिटल प्रमाण पत्र वितरण।

प्रदेश के सभी शासकीय और अशासकीय मेडिकल कॉलेज एवं हॉस्पिटल के चिकित्सक ऑनलाइन जुड़ेंगे।

#MPThanksDoctors

LIVE STREAMING

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लोक स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, मध्यप्रदेश



Bombay HC to Maharashtra govt:

STOP POLITICAL RALLIES THAT DEFY COVID-19 PROTOCOL

"We'll not allow this to happen, We are shutting down courts. We are not functioning in full strength, but the political rallies are going on," said a bench of chief justice Dipankar Datta and justice Girish Kulkarni while hearing public interest litigation on Covid-19 management.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Bombay high court on Wednesday told the Maharashtra govt to stop political rallies that defy Covid-19 protocol.

"We'll not allow this to happen, We are shutting down courts. We are not functioning in full strength, but the political rallies are going on,"

said a bench of chief justice Dipankar Datta and justice Girish Kulkarni while hearing public interest litigation on Covid-19 management. The judges referred to the protest rally for naming of the Navi Mumbai airport and noted that there were 25,000 participants.

"How will you manage Covid? Is this the time for a rally? Last rally

was over naming of an airport. Can it not wait till it is over?" asked the CJ. The judges also questioned whether the airport is ready for operation. "Nothing. First name, then airport. And you assemble so many people...25,000 people!" the CJ exclaimed.

Advocate Rajesh Inamdar, for a petitioner, referred to the OBC reser-

vations protest rallies. The judges also referred to reservations protests. "When will political leaders go before the electorate and say 'the matter is before the court, the highest court in the land. It has the final say, not the government'," the CJ said. The judges also asked if political leaders are not on par with those holding fake vaccination camps. "Are they any less than those holding fake vaccination camps? They are trying to take mileage for political gains. Why? Let it (rallies) wait for some time," said the CJ.

Inamdar said the Delta variant is highest in Maharashtra with 21 cases to date. He said Japan is seeing a fifth Covid-19 wave and UK a fourth wave. "These countries are not able to tackle it," he added. The judges said there are lessons to learn from the second wave in India. "We should all take lessons from the second wave. Everything was normal since November. We invited it," the CJ lamented.

Maharashtra govt to provide real time date on oxygen supply, covid-19 drugs

Maharashtra government is coming up with a comprehensive integrated dashboard that will provide real-time information on oxygen supply as well as medicines required for patients suffering from Covid-19 infection.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Maharashtra government is coming up with a comprehensive integrated dashboard that will provide real-time information on oxygen supply as well as medicines required for patients suffering from Covid-19 infection. The same has been presented in front of the state High Court and this will be operational now. The public will get the full access of the portal after two weeks, a report by The IE



report said that the government is also in talks with the BMC and PMC to merge their dashboards in the newly formed dashboard.

It is to note that the dashboard will be having a separate access for the details for the areas that are managed by the BMC and Pune Municipal Corporation, the state clarified. The data provided on the dashboard is expected to be refreshed/ updated every three hours to begin with and this will be eventually followed by the real-time data. According to the report, around 3,000 hospitals have been connected to the dashboard. To be sure, all existing dashboards by the state will be discontinued and the state government will be merging them into one. Citing Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakar, the

The move has come amid PILs filed in HC regarding Covid-19 management. Meanwhile, a division bench at the state HC held a hearing regarding a PIL that alleged management of Covid-19 treatment in Maharashtra as improper. The PIL sought information on shortage of drugs and urged the monitoring of black-marketing and profiteering that allegedly took place during procurement and distribution of drugs used in treatment of Covid-19 infection. The bench is also expected to hear an intervention application submitted by actor Sonu Sood in a PIL that also alleges improper Covid management.

Mumbai jeweller shot dead in armed daylight heist

According to eyewitnesses and CCTV footage, three unidentified persons on triple-load on an Activa scooter came and then went into the shop. They threatened the owner and started emptying many of the counters and display shelves.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a shocker, three scooter-borne armed robbers carried out a daring daylight heist on a gold jewellery shop and shot dead its owner before fleeing, officials said here on Wednesday.

The sensational incident occurred at the Om Sairaj Jewellers at Gavde Nagar in Dahisar east around 10.45 a.m. in full public view of the busy locality, and the police have launched a manhunt for the culprits.



According to eyewitnesses and CCTV footage, three unidentified persons on triple-load on an Activa scooter came and then went into the shop. They threatened the owner and started emptying many of the counters and display shelves. When the owner tried to prevent them, they whipped out a pistol and shot him in the head before speeding away on the scooter with two bags full of the looted jewellery. The exact quantity or value of the stolen booty is not known and several teams of the Dahisar Police Station are carrying out further investigations as the incident sparked outrage in the city.

Maharashtra to start home vaccination on trial basis; won't wait for Centre's nod: Govt to HC

State Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakar told a division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni that home vaccination on a trial and experimental basis would be introduced in Pune district first.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government on Wednesday told the Bombay High Court that it would soon start home vaccination against COVID-19 for people who are immobile or bedridden on an experimental basis, and would not wait for an approval from the Centre.

State Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakar told a division bench of

Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni that home vaccination on a trial and experimental basis would be introduced in Pune district first. "We will not refer the proposal to start home vaccination to the Centre for approval. We (state government) will take our own decision. We will explore this possibility (home vaccination) on a trial basis in Pune district," Kumbhakar said.

The state government on Tuesday filed an affidavit in the HC, saying there would be conditions imposed, like taking a written consent from the beneficiary's family and a certificate from the family doctor taking responsibility in case of any adverse reaction to the vaccine.

The HC on Wednesday said the condition asking for a certificate from a doctor was "impractical".

"We hope and trust that you (government) won't insist on a doctor to certify. How can a doctor take



responsibility? Do not put such an impractical condition," Chief Justice Datta said. The court was hearing a public interest litigation filed by two advocates - Dhruvi Kapadia and Kunal Tiwari - seeking a direction to the Centre and the state government to introduce door-to-door vaccination for senior citizens above the age of 75, specially-abled people and those who are bed-ridden and hence, unable to move out of their homes.

On Tuesday, the government in its

affidavit said it would have to first take approval from the Union government before starting home vaccinations against COVID-19.

This prompted the court to question why the approval was required when other states like Kerala, Jharkhand and Bihar have already started door-to-door vaccination.

The high court on Wednesday pointed out some media reports of nurses and doctors travelling to people's homes in a hilly region of Tripura to administer the vaccine.

The court posted the matter for further hearing on Thursday in the judges' chamber. "We will hear the matter tomorrow in chambers in the presence of the chairman of the State COVID-19 Task Force," the bench said. The HC also said the state government can go ahead with its home vaccination drive on an experimental basis and need not wait for orders from the court.

Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray Meet Amid Reports Of Maharashtra Alliance Strain

Sources indicated that the discussion could be on the issues between the ruling Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance and even former minis-

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar met Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray at his official residence Varsha. Sources said cabinet minister Jeetendra Awhad, Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil and Aditya Thackeray were also present in the crucial meet - the first between the two leaders after a very public row with the Congress and rumours that Shiv Sena is considering a patch-up with the BJP, its ally of 35 years.

Sources indicated that the discussion could be on the issues between the ruling Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance and



even former minister Anil Deshmukh. Cracks surfaced within Maharashtra's ruling coalition after Congress leader Nana Patole's comment that the alliance with the Sena has an "expiry date" and in the next assembly polls, his party will fly solo. As the Sena tried to project unity, Congress's Prithviraj Chavan undid its efforts with a remark that the alliance will have a

"Congress Chief Minister" next time.

Earlier this month, Thackeray had a one-on-one with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Shiv Sena explained it as protocol and said it values personal relations irrespective of political affiliations.

For Sharad Pawar's party, the resignation of Anil Deshmukh and the events surrounding it has been a sore point. In April, Deshmukh had quit citing "moral grounds" after the Bombay High Court ordered a preliminary CBI investigation into corruption allegations levelled against him by former Mumbai police chief Param Bir Singh. Singh had accused Deshmukh of corruption in police transfers and postings.

On Tuesday, Deshmukh did not appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning in connection with a money laundering case. Citing COVID-19 and his old age, the 71-year-old had requested for a virtual interaction. On Saturday, Deshmukh had sought a fresh date for appearance in the money laundering case.

Six districts to launch mass drug administration

Known as elephantiasis, filariasis is the second most disabling disease after mental health according to WHO and is transmitted by infected mosquitoes. Usually acquired in childhood, the infection causes enlargement of body parts.

Team Absolute | Pune

Six Maharashtra districts - Gadchiroli, Chandrapur, Bhandara, Gondia, Nanded and Yavatmal - will conduct mass drug administration (MDA) against lymphatic filariasis from July 1 to 15.

Known as elephantiasis, filariasis is the second most disabling disease after mental health according to WHO and is transmitted by infected mosquitoes. Usually acquired in childhood, the infection damages the lymphatic system and if left untreated,

causes enlargement of body parts. Maharashtra has 18 filariasis endemic districts with close to 31,258 lymphoedema (abnormal swelling in an arm or leg) and 11,929 hydrocele (abnormal swelling of the scrotum) cases as of 2020-21. During the MDA, a combination of two drugs - diethylcarbamazine (DEC) and albendazole - or three drugs - Ivermectin, DEC, and Albendazole - is administered to the eligible population in affected areas to prevent transmission of the disease. Of the six districts, Gadchiroli, Chandrapur and Bhandara will undertake triple-drug therapy (IDA).

IDA, a new drug combination approved by the WHO, has been proven to be more effective and helpful in reducing the number of MDA rounds needed to eliminate

filariasis. The state health directorate organised a virtual media sensitisation workshop on June 29 to highlight the importance of MDA rounds in eliminating filariasis. Health Minister Rajesh Tope in a video appeal at the workshop said, "During MDA, trained health workers will follow Covid-19 appropriate protocols and conduct house visits to provide free-of-cost anti-filaria medicines to all beneficiaries in all communities in affected areas. These anti-filaria medicines are completely safe and effective." Dr Sanjeev Jadhav, additional director of health services, said, "for an MDA round to be successful, all households in an endemic area must receive and consume the anti-filaria drugs in the presence of the healthcare worker."

Climate change likely to impact agricultural productivity in Maharashtra: Report

The report, titled 'Climate Change Impacts on Maharashtra Agriculture,' has examined week-wise 30-year averages of years 1989-2018 and predicted rainfall and temperature data for years 2021-50 for eight districts across Khandesh, Marathwada and Vidarbha regions of the state.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Climate change is likely to affect agricultural productivity in Maharashtra, especially in four major crops soybean, cotton, wheat and gram, according to a report. Maharashtra faces an increasing risk from climate change that is likely to impact the production of the four crops grown in the state, according to a report by a global not-for-profit organisation Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC).

The report, titled 'Climate Change Impacts on Maharashtra Agriculture,' has examined week-wise 30-year averages of years 1989-2018 and predicted rainfall and temperature data for years 2021-50 for eight districts across Khandesh, Marathwada and Vidarbha regions of the state. ISC Associate Director (Water and Agriculture Program) Romit Sen said the report maps climate modelling and projections (both historical and futuristic) with crop phenology coupled with community-based participatory assessments.



The analysis maps the parameters at a much granular weekly scale to weave a comprehensive understanding of the likely impacts of climate change on each of the crops and the farmers, Sen added. "Climate analysis predicts mismatch in rainfall and temperature patterns with crop phenology across the monsoon (kharif) and winter (rabi) season," Sen said.

The report further showed that the late onset of monsoon and intermittent dry and

wet spells have impacted the germination of soybean and cotton. Excess rainfall during the mid-kharif season will lead to an increase in fungal diseases, weeds and pests.

This is likely to impact the production of pods in soybean and boll formation in cotton, it noted. Additionally, it stated that waterlogged soils and humid conditions will promote rot, leading to a loss of soil nutrients and fertilisers from the soil. The overall impact of excessive rainfall during the fruit

formation and maturity stage for both the kharif crops soybean and cotton will affect the yield and quality of the produce, it noted. Further, it said the biggest challenge for wheat cultivation in the years to come is high temperatures at the time of grain ripening. Grain weight goes down with a rise in temperature, and temperatures during grain filling are predicted to increase, it said. Gram cultivation will see a sudden increase in temperatures during pod filling, causing pods to fill less, it added.

ISC Country Director (India) Vivek P Adhia said, "There is very little, or almost no rainfall predicted for the rabi season, making the crops entirely dependent on irrigation. With groundwater being the major source of irrigation, the pressure on it will increase."

Adhia added that reducing the impacts of changing climate on agriculture will require integrating those in informing farming decisions, improving quality of inputs, enhancing knowledge on better cultivation practices, and adoption of better management practices for resource conservation.

Dilip Kumar hospitalised again

The 98-year-old actor was admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) of Hinduja Hospital, Khar, after reportedly complaining of breathlessness. As per reports, he is stable now.



breathlessness.

A health update was tweeted from the actor's official account on June 9, which reads: "Thank you for your prayers. A successful pleural aspiration procedure was performed on Dilip Saab. I personally spoke to Dr. Jalil Parkar and Dr. Nitin Gokhale. They are optimistic that he will be discharged tomorrow (Thursday)." "While the actor was in hospital earlier, his wife, veteran actress Saira Banu had earlier issued a statement on his Twitter account thanking fans for their love and prayers and requesting everyone to not pay heed to rumours. Dilip Kumar was discharged from the hospital on June 11.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood legend Dilip Kumar has been hospitalised once again, for the second time this month.

The 98-year-old actor was admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) of Hinduja Hospital, Khar on Tuesday, after reportedly complaining of breathlessness. As per reports, he is stable now.

This is the second time this month that the veteran actor has been admitted to hospital. He was hospitalised on June 6 after experiencing



EDITOR'S SPECS

TWEET FOR MEDICAL HELP

The Covid-19 pandemic has magnified Twitter role in keeping people connected and amplifying authoritative information from credible sources. The platform has seen tweets on seeking or providing medical help increase by 1958 per cent during the pandemic outbreak. Tweets on Covid-19 grew manifold from April 1 to May 31 and the service witnessed 100 per cent growth in Covid-19 conversations compared to the previous two months (February 1- March 31). The conversations can be categorised into four broad categories: medical help, sharing information, raising funds and mental health. Tweets around seeking or providing medical help increased by 1958 per cent (20 times), there was also a 916 per cent (10 times) rise in people leveraging the platform to find accurate information on the latest developments, best Covid-19 practices, vaccination drives, and other relevant information. Further, conversations around relief efforts, and fundraising went up by 731 per cent (8 times), while those on mental well-being recorded a 153 per cent (2.5 times) increase during the surge. While tweets on #IndiaFightsCorona saw a 530 per cent increase, among local and state-related conversations, #DelhiFightsCorona and #MaharashtraFightsCorona saw a significant increase in tweets -- with conversations going up by 1872 per cent and 2377 per cent, respectively. Twitter also introduced several features, including multiple state-specific Event Pages for credible updates from the region. Twitter introduced a number of features and initiatives in support of the Covid-19 conversation in India. Some of these were a dedicated Covid-19 hub on the explore page, several Twitter events pages that bring together the latest tweets from a number of authoritative and trustworthy government organisations, media and civil society sources in local languages, an SOS page, related topics, Twitter lists of credible accounts to follow, among several others.

China's biggest challenge: Surviving autocratic Xi

N. C. Bipindra

Mao Zedong, it is said, was furious over the slights he had received at the Eighth Party Congress (1956 and 1958) -- the call for collective leadership, the assertions that China would never have a cult of personality, the removal of Mao's thought as the guiding principle for the nation, and the criticisms of adventurism. He ensured the people whom he considered responsible for his slight paid for it dearly, with their lives in some instances. In 1989, the Paramount Leader of China, Deng Xiaoping, remarked on the dangers of one-man rule. He said, "Building a nation's fate on the reputation of one or two people is very unhealthy and dangerous". And he knew that very well, having endured and resurrected himself through constant manoeuvring from the endless purges crafted and executed by Mao. In fact, Deng was so paranoid and impacted by Mao's rule over China that he introduced term limits for state officials. This famous statement finds a place in the 'Short History of Communist Party' editions published both in 2001 and 2010. In March 2018, the National People's Congress abolished term limits for President. With Chairman of the Communist Party and Chairman of the Central Military Commission not having term limits anyway, abolishing term limits set things in place for President for Life, something Mao thrived on. It is, therefore, no surprise that Deng's famous remark on dangers of one-man rule finds no place in the 2021 edition of the 'Short History of the Communist Party'. This is but a natural progression in the increasingly totalitarian, dictatorial, and vice-like grip that Xi Jinping has on China and its people. Xi, or as he is now come to be portrayed Xitler, has taken every play out of Mao's secret game book and has further honed it into a fine art. This has given an outward appearance of not having impacted the common Chinese people, who can go about their lives in perfect harmony in a society with increasing buying power and disposable incomes. However, even a cursory scratch on the surface, and the angst, anguish, and heartbreak stare one in the face. Mao was never averse to losing a few millions, contending that China has millions more. In the initial days after the Wuhan Virus was detected, there was a massive information and security blanket thrown across China. Based on various online theories, it can safely be assumed that millions suffered due to the virus and thousands, if not millions, perished in China. However, till date the official figures for China, the ground zero for the Wuhan virus are less than hundred thousand. The virus, though, has created mayhem across the globe. Xi, like Mao before, decided to sacrifice thousands of common Chinese to try his bioweapon before unleashing it on the world. As one of the more prominent of online enthusiasts probing the virus, a young Indian, who goes by the name TheSeeker, rightly pointed in a recent interview that if the Wuhan Virus did not originate in a lab, why is the Communist Party of China trying to obfuscate the

reality?

Deng initiated opening of the Chinese economy to external investments and is widely considered as the architect of China's economic growth story. This led to the mushrooming of many companies that have today become global behemoths. Whilst Deng encouraged that, Mao before him despised anyone becoming larger than the Party. When he sensed someone growing a voice, they would suddenly self-criticism in public and mostly vanish from public memory. Of late, under Xi, we are seeing a repeat performance. Zhang Yiming the brains behind TikTok and founder of Byte Dance; Colin Huang the Chairman of e-commerce giant Pinduoduo; Wang Xing CEO and founder of the Chinese Delivery Giant Meituan and of course Jack Ma, teacher-turned-investment-wizard have publicly self-criticised and decided to quietly step away from the companies they envisioned, created, nurtured and raised to global standards.



The CCP is creating a consumption-driven innovation-led economy that is, as Mr Ananth Krishnan mentions in 'India's China Challenge', city driven. The CCP, under Xi, is creating this by using the ancient Chinese household registration system, hukou, as a weapon. By seducing workers to migrate to cities under the lure of riches, but by employing the hukou system ruthlessly, it has ensured families are torn apart and children cannot grow under the loving care of their parents; something every child deserves. If the same happened in any democratic country, the 'ruler' would be voted out of office. Even in erstwhile China, people would have had to endure the misery for two terms with hopes of a better tomorrow. This, unfortunately, is not the case anymore in Xi's empire. Xi has all the hallmarks of an emperor without clothes. Most emperors, throughout history, have tried to leave their indelible mark by creating projects/monuments. Emperor Qin Shihuangdi had built the Great Wall and every emperor thereafter have had his own massive construction project. Mao, a voracious reader of history, had decreed ten great buildings to commemorate the tenth year of his reign. Xi has bettered it by trying to create his project beyond China's boundaries. And so, we have seen the creation of the 'One Belt-One Road' (OBOR), Xi's vanity project as a commemoration of his reign. Wuhan Virus, forcing self-criticism, weaponising the hukou, creating gargantuan projects; Xi is more like Mao 2.0 or more probably Mao on steroids. Are a redux of the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution round the corner. Highly possible when one man decides a nation's fate. Can China and the common Chinese survive Xitler?

INDIA BADLY NEEDS CYBER REGULATOR TO TAME SOCIAL MEDIA ENTITIES

Nishant Arora

As the Indian government struggles to tame the social media giants and force them to comply with the new IT rules, the time is ripe to appoint a nodal cyber regulator to deal with Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and others, leading experts said on Wednesday. There is no universal cyber law or world body to deal with social media companies and various countries have appointed/formed their own cyber regulators who separately deal with Big Tech when they fail to address the laws of the land. "Twitter now appears to be on a collision course with the Parliament of India. The time has come to bring in a regulator in the technology sector in India to deal with the landscape," leading cyber security expert Jiten Jain told correspondent. There is currently no provision in law to impose penalties. The government must take appropriate actions against Twitter for flouting legal orders by the government under section 69A, he said. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology has asked for an explanation from the microblogging site Twitter over denying access to the accounts of Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and committee head Shashi Tharoor.

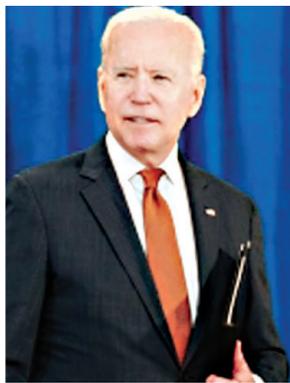


Twitter has locked horns with the government for a long time over its compliance with the new IT rules. On Tuesday, Facebook India and Google India representatives appeared before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT to explain their views on safeguarding citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social and online news media platforms. Sources said that the Committee has directed Facebook and Google to follow the new IT rules and laws of the land. According to cyber law expert Virag Gupta, it is clear from the Parliamentary Committee proceedings report that Facebook and Google are also not complying with new IT rules. "As per new rules, these companies were to appoint nodal officer, compliance officer in India, but there is no such public disclosure for the same. As per modus operandi of Twitter, Facebook has also appointed ad hoc type of grievance officer in India. If Twitter is targeted for non-compliance of new IT rules, then all tech giants should be dealt with in the same manner," Gupta told IANS. The Delhi Police's Cyber Cell has also registered an FIR against Twitter under several serious sections of the POCSO Act on a complaint of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). Twitter said it has zero tolerance policy towards child sexual exploitation. Regarding FIR for objectionable content against Twitter, it may create big chain reaction against other tech companies. "Facebook, Google, YouTube, Instagram etc. are also have huge amount of objectionable content, viz. pornography, drugs, nudity, child sex abuse etc., which is unlawful as well as contrary to their own policies," Gupta argued. "Cyber and IT matters come within the purview of Union list while police come within State list as per the 7th schedule of Constitution. It will be better to deal with such matters through a cyber regulator," he emphasised.

international

BIDEN MEETS EXPERTS ON VOTING RIGHTS AFTER SENATE SETBACK

The President and his staff highlighted ways that the Administration will continue working with Congress to pass critical legislation and ramp up engagement with the American people on voting rights to pay dues.



news agency quoted the readout as saying "The President and his staff highlighted ways that the Administration will continue working with Congress to pass critical legislation and ramp up engagement with the American

people on voting rights," the White House said. "The President also reiterated his unwavering determination to win the fight to protect the sacred right to vote in free and fair elections." Hyper partisanship has become a stumbling block for passing voting rights reform legislation in Congress, a Democratic priority in light of successive efforts by former President Donald Trump and his allies to overturn the 2020 election results. Legislation passed in several Republican-leaning states in recent months to limit mail-in voting made Democrats more adamant that they must act to counter what they believed to be Republican efforts to deprive minorities of ballot access. US senators voted 50-50, strictly along party lines, last week to block the advancement of the For the People Act, a Democratic-sponsored bill aimed at sweeping reforms to voting rights.

PALESTINE SLAMS ARAB NORMALISATION DEALS WITH ISRAEL

Ramallah: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has slammed the normalisation agreements that some Arab countries have reached with Israel in recent times. "The agreements to normalise relations recently signed by Israel with some Arab countries are an illusion that will not succeed," Abbas said in an online address on Tuesday. The President added that peace and security "will only be achieved" at the end of the Israeli occupation, reports Xinhua news agency. Abbas also said that peace with Israel can only be achieved by "the recognition of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, mainly the rights of freedom, independence, and establishing a Palestinian state." "We agreed to sign painful historic peace agreements, recognized the state of Israel under the UN Resolutions 242 and 338, and signed the Oslo accords in 1993," he said, adding that the Jewish state has violated these agreements.

US Covid-19 vaccination slows down as Delta variant infections climb

Washington | Agencies

The Covid-19 vaccination in the US is slowing down while the highly transmissible Delta variant has spread to nearly every state, fueling experts' fear about potential Covid-19 spikes. The 7-day average number of administered Covid-19 vaccine doses per day has decreased by 55.3 per cent from the previous week, according to the latest weekly report of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). About 46.4 per cent of the US population is fully vaccinated against Covid-19, and 54.2 per cent of the population has received at least one shot as of Tuesday, the Xinhua news agency reported. Roughly 154.2 million people are fully vaccinated. But some states -- such as Alabama, Arkansas,

Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Wyoming -- have low vaccination rates. The White House has confirmed the country will not hit US President Joe Biden's goal of getting 70 per cent of American adults to receive at least one Covid-19 vaccine shot by the Fourth of July. Amid the slowdown of vaccination rates, the infections caused by variants, especially the highly contagious Delta variant which was first recognised in India, are climbing. The proportion of the Delta variant infections for the 2-week period ending June 19 is expected to increase to 20.6 per cent nationally and be higher in some regions, according to the CDC. The figure was only 2.8 per cent in the 2-week frame ending in May 22, and increased to 9.5 per cent in the 2-week frame ending in

June 5, CDC data show. The infections caused by the Delta variant now account for one fifth of the newly diagnosed Covid-19 cases in the US, according to the CDC. The variant is expected to become the dominant coronavirus strain in the US, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky warned. In Los Angeles County, the pace of Delta's spread has prompted officials to reinstate mask guidance for public indoor spaces -- regardless of vaccination status. The new, voluntary mask guidance is needed until health officials can "better understand how and to who the Delta variant is spreading," the county's department of public health said. Experts are concerned the variants could cause a resurgence of Covid-19 in the fall if the unvaccinated population do not take actions in a timely manner.

WHO certifies China malaria-free after 70-yr effort

Geneva | Agencies

Following a 70-year effort, the World Health Organization on Tuesday certified that China is malaria free, a notable feat for a country that reported 30 million cases of the disease annually in the 1940s. "Today we congratulate the people of China on ridding the country of malaria," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, was quoted in an official statement issued by the world body as saying. "Their success was hard-earned and came only after decades of targeted and sustained action. With this announcement, China joins the growing number of countries that are showing the world that a malaria-free future is a viable goal." China is the first country in the WHO Western Pacific Region to be awarded a malaria-free certification in more than three decades, according to the statement. Other countries in the region that have achieved this status include Australia (1981), Singapore (1982) and



Brunei Darussalam (1987). Beginning in the 1950s, health authorities in China worked to locate and stop the spread of malaria by providing preventive anti-malarial medicines for people at risk of the disease as well as treatment for those who had fallen ill, the WHO statement said.

In 1967, the Chinese Government launched the "523 Project" - a nationwide research programme aimed at finding new treatments for malaria. This effort, involving more than 500 scientists from 60 institutions, led to the discovery in the 1970s of artemisinin, the core compound of artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs), the most effective anti-malarial drugs available today. By the end of 1990, the number of malaria cases in China had plummeted to 117 000, and deaths were reduced by 95 per cent. Within 10 years since 2003, the number of cases had fallen to about 5,000 annually. Takeshi Kasai, Regional Director, WHO Western Pacific Regional Office, said: "China's tireless effort to achieve this important milestone demonstrates how strong political commitment and strengthening national health systems can result in eliminating a disease that once was a major public health problem." China's achievement takes us one step closer towards the vision of a malaria-free Western Pacific Region."

POLISH HEALTH MINISTER WARNS OF POSSIBLE 4TH WAVE

Warsaw: Niedzielski

emphasised that while the Delta variant seems more infectious than previous mutations of the coronavirus, vaccines appear to prevent serious symptoms and hospitalisation. Polish Health Minister Adam Niedzielski warned that a fourth wave of the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to occur, probably in the second half of August. Talking to Radio Plus on Tuesday, Niedzielski said that he expects a surge of cases similar to the one that is taking place in the UK, where the Delta variant has caused rising infection numbers, reports Xinhua news agency. He added that indoor mask wearing will remain compulsory for the time being. Niedzielski emphasised that while the Delta variant seems more infectious than previous mutations of the coronavirus, vaccines appear to prevent serious symptoms and hospitalisation. He also said vaccinations will remain free of charge until at least September. Poland has been gradually lifting restrictions put in place to contain the pandemic, with infection numbers falling and more citizens being vaccinated. So far, 11.7 million Poles have been fully vaccinated, or 30.68 per cent of the total population. The country has administered a total of 27,512,324 vaccine doses till date. Since the pandemic began last year, Poland has registered 2,879,811 confirmed coronavirus cases, with 75,005 deaths.



Iran not in a hurry to revive nuclear deal

Tehran | Agencies

Iran's current administration is not in a rush to push the negotiations to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement before the new government under President-elect Ebrahim Raisi takes power in August, a top official announced here. "If what we have in mind is ensured, there will be no delay, but if it is not, the continuation of the negotiations will be adjourned to the next government," Ali Rabieei, the spokesman for the outgoing administration of President Hassan Rouhani, said in a briefing on Tuesday. Reiterating remarks made on Sunday by Tehran's chief nuclear negotiator Abbas Araqchi, Rabieei said all the issues needed to be negotiated to revive the agreement have already been discussed, reports Xinhua news agency. Tehran is now waiting for its counterparts including the

US to announce their own political decisions, in order to "talk more clearly in the next round of talks based on that," the spokesman added. A consensus, he noted, already exists regarding the removal of sanctions related to the main sectors of Iran's economy, such as energy, finance, banking, and insurance, but all issues must be settled for an agreement to exist in practice. "We have come to the conclusion that the negotiations have lasted sufficiently, and we expect the US side to make its final decision to return to its obligations and implement international rules," Rabieei said. On Monday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry once again urged the parties in the Vienna talks to make their decisions on the revitalisation of the 2015 nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).



BTS' 'Butter' tops Billboard Hot 100 for 5th consecutive week

Seoul | Agencies

"Butter", the latest hit from the South Korean boy band BTS, remains at the top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart for the fifth consecutive weeks. Out of the 54 songs to launch on number one, this is only the 11th track to remain at the summit in its first five weeks. "Butter" is also the second longest reigning song from its debut by a group in the chart's history. The

Grammy-nominated band is all set to release their single CD "Butter" on July 9, which will include the song and a new single. They recently wrapped up their live-streamed fanmeet "BTS 2021 MUSTER SOWOOZOO" successfully. As many as 1.33 million viewers tuned in from 195 countries/regions across two days.

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actress Vanessa Hudgens has opened up about working with Andrew Garfield and their upcoming film "Tick, Tick... Boom!". The film is based on the semi-autobiographical musical of the same name by Jonathan Larson, and is directed by Lin Manuel Miranda. "I'm a big Jonathan Larson fan. I was introduced to his work... fell in love with a world that Jonathan Larson wrote and created. So, after that I am playing a different character, that to me is the legacy that is Jonathan Larson," Hudgens said on "The Drew Barrymore Show". "Then, I heard about 'Tick Tick... Boom!' and I was like, I must be a part of this movie in whatever capacity. I ended up getting to play a part and Donovan is played by Andrew Garfield," she added. "It's special because he wrote for himself as a one-man play and it's autobiographical. It just really sets the tone and gives you a peek into what it was being a struggling artiste," she added. "I can't wait for this, Jonathan Larson, Lin Manuel view, Andrew Garfield, and a tattoo to commemorate the end of it," she concluded on Barrymore's show, which airs on Zee

VANESSA HUDGENS: I'M A BIG JONATHAN LARSON FAN



Cafe in India.

JK SIMMONS: CHRIS PRATT BRINGS A LEVEL OF HUMOUR TO WHATEVER HE DOES

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor JK Simmons, who will be seen in "The Tomorrow War" alongside Chris Pratt, has praised the Hollywood star. Simmons said Pratt, who is also serving as an executive producer for the movie, brings a level of humour to whatever he does. Simmons said: "Pratt brings a level of humour to whatever he does, which is important in a movie like this." He added: "And the way he talks about his wife, his kid, and the farm he lives on, you can tell he has a genuine love of life beyond all the showbiz stuff, which is a beautiful thing. If you have to spend 13 hours on a set with someone, he's a great guy to spend that time with."

On his relationship with Pratt's character, Simmons said: "In terms of his relationship with Dan, it's strained when we first meet them. They've been leading separate lives, and Dan is angry at his dad, and rightfully so. There's reluctance on James' part to admit to culpability for anything that happened between them in the past, which adds to the drama."

Simmons describes his character as "a bit of an enigma", which fascinated him.

"I'm always searching for some level of ambiguity in the roles I take because that's what people are like in real life. But I also look for parts that offer a journey for the character, and James definitely goes through a major one in this story," he said.

Directed by Chris McKay, "The Tomorrow War" is set to stream on July 2 on Amazon Prime Video.



WHAT DID CHRISTINA AGUILERA SAY ABOUT BRITNEY SPEARS?

Los Angeles | Agencies

Pop star Christina Aguilera broke her silence regarding Britney Spears and her conservatorship. The singer penned an open letter on June 28, 2021, to Spears and shared it on social media with fans. Christina Aguilera, 40, took to Twitter to show support for Britney Spears and her conservatorship case amid her explosive hearing. Aguilera shared a throwback photo of the two of them, writing: "These past few days I've been thinking about Britney and everything she is going through." It is unacceptable that any woman, or human, wanting to be in control of their own destiny might not be allowed to live life as they wish. "To be silenced, ignored, bullied or denied support by those 'close' to you is the most depleting, devastating and demeaning thing imaginable. Spears and Aguilera both starred in the 1990s Mickey Mouse Club reboot. The show also starred Justin Timberlake, JC Chasez, Keri Russell, and Ryan Gosling

Ellie Goulding reunites with ex Ed Sheeran at Euro Cup



London | Agencies

Ellie Goulding and Ed Sheeran were reunited at the England vs Germany Euro 2020 match on Tuesday, eight years on from their bitter public split.

The former flames were joined by their new partners, husband Caspar Jopling and wife Cherry Seaborn respectively, as well as some members of the Royal Family, as they sat in the Royal Box at Wembley Stadium. Despite having a very public fall out back in 2013, in which Ed insinuated that Ellie had 'cheated' on him with One Direction star Niall Horan, the pair seemed to have moved on from the incident as they mingled in the box after watching England's victory. Ed, 30, and his wife, 29, sported vintage England shirts for the occasion and Cherry wore jeans while mixing with some of the Royal family, including the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and their eldest son, George.

Meanwhile, Ellie, 34, cut a stylish figure for the outing, donning a red long-sleeved dress which featured a baby pink print and a matching waistband. Ellie and Ed are rumoured to have dated in 2013, when a photo of them holding hands at an awards ceremony was published.

BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH JOINS CAST OF 'DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS' ADAPTATION



London | Agencies

English star Benedict Cumberbatch has been roped in for the adaptation of "Dungeons & Dragons". The 44-year-old joins the cast of the upcoming big screen project that includes Chris Pine, Michelle Rodriguez, and Rege-Jean Page, reports aceshowbiz.com. "After narrating the animated film, Benedict couldn't not be in the film version. Filming has been in the UK too, so it was convenient for him travel-wise," a source told The Sun newspaper. This is not the first time Cumberbatch is featuring in a fantasy adaptation. He previously has voiced Smaug and Sauron in Peter Jackson's "The Hobbit" trilogy. "Dungeons & Dragons", which is set to be released in 2023, has been shooting on locations such as the Wells Cathedral in Somerset, Alnwick Castle in Northumberland and Carrickfergus Castle in Ireland, where Rodriguez was spotted on a scooter in costume on her way to the castle.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Amanda Holden



Indians slip in ICC rankings after WTC final loss

India's poor outing in the World Test Championship (WTC) final against New Zealand saw quite a few players slip in the International Cricket Council (ICC) Test rankings announced on Wednesday.

Dubai | Agencies
Ravindra Jadeja, who aggregated 31 in two innings of the WTC final and took one wicket while conceding 45 runs in 15.2 overs saw his stocks fall a bit as Jason Holder, who aggregated just 10 and took

only two wickets in 32 overs of the last Test against South Africa played around the same time, moved to the top displacing the Indian. Wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant's failure with the bat saw him slip as well. He was joint sixth with Indian opener Rohit Sharma but four in the first innings

and 41 in the second innings -- that saw him get out to an irresponsible shot -- pushed him down to seventh. Sharma managed to stick to sixth after getting 34 and 30 across two innings. No.3 batsman Cheteshwar Pujara, who had poor scores of eight and 15, slipped to 16th. He has had a 2021 peak

position of seventh this year following his success in Australia. In the list of bowlers, R Ashwin is the best Indian, having retained his second spot. The other Indian bowlers, who played the WTC final, occupy the spots between 16 to 19.

Jadeja slipped to 17th after his lacklustre while Bumrah too moved down after a wicketless outing at WTC final despite bowling 36.4 overs. Ishant Sharma moved up to 16th while Mohammad Shami retained his 18th spot. Shami had taken four wickets in the first innings while Ishant took three.

2ND ODI: KATE PICKS FIVE WICKETS AS INDIA BOWLED OUT FOR 221

Taunton | Agencies
England pace bowler Kate Cross on Wednesday took five wickets for 34 runs to help bowl Indian women out for 221 in the second ODI, which also saw skipper Mithali Raj scoring a half-century before developing neck pain and handing over reins to deputy Harmanpreet Kaur in the initial part of the innings. "Captain Mithali Raj has pain in her neck and will not take the field immediately. Vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur will lead the team in Mithali's absence. Radha Yadav is the substitute fielder," said a statement from the Board of Control for Cricket in India. Indian women's team had got off to a flying start with openers Smriti Mandhana (22) and Shafali Verma (44) adding 56 before a loss of three quick wickets, including the close stumping of Shafali, put them on the backfoot at 77 for three.



Harmanpreet Kaur (19) and Mithali (59 off 92 balls) then added 68 runs for the fourth wicket before Harmanpreet fell. As wickets kept tumbling around her, Mithali remained the lone batter standing. Towards the end, Jhulan Goswami (19) and Poonam Yadav (10) added 28 for the last wicket to take India past 200. Left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone took three wickets for 33. England women had won the first ODI by eight wickets. Brief scores: Indian women: 221 all out in 50 overs (Mithali Raj 59, Shafali Verma 44, Kate Cross 5/34, S Ecclestone 3/33)

INDIA DIDN'T SHOW THE PATIENCE REQUIRED IN A TEST: GAVASKAR

Mumbai Former India batsman Sunil Gavaskar has said that India "just didn't show the patience required in a Test" to take on the New Zealand challenge in the World Test Championship final at Southampton recently. New Zealand won the rain-marred summit clash against India by eight wickets to bag the winning purse of Rs 12 crore along with an ICC Test Championship Mace. The legendary cricketer pointed out that the Indians, "so used to the white-ball game" were responsible for their own downfall as they played some "forgettable" strokes. "The conditions on the final day were bright, and the sun was out in all its glory, but the Indians, so used to the white-ball game, just didn't show the patience required in a Test match and were instrumental in their own downfall with some forgettable shots," said Gavaskar in his column in the Telegraph. India folded up for just 170 in the second innings, leaving New Zealand with a victory target of 139.



WIMBLEDON:

Djokovic dispatches Anderson to enter 3rd round



London | Agencies
Top seed and world No. 1 Novak Djokovic cruised through to the third round at Wimbledon with a 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 win over 2018 finalist Kevin Anderson on Wednesday. Djokovic was dominant as he won four out of the eight break points he got and did not face any break point from the South African who seems to have plateaued after a good start to his career. The Serb won 84 per cent of the points on his first serve and 73 per cent of the points on second serve. Anderson committed three double faults to Djokovic's one. Djokovic is eyeing a hat-trick of Wimbledon titles, a feat that only Roger Federer, Bjorn Borg and Pete

Alize shows Bianca the door



London France's world No. 58 Alize Cornet caused a major upset when she beat world No. 7 Bianca Andreescu of Canada 6-2, 6-1 in their delayed first-round match at Wimbledon in one hour and 22 minutes on Wednesday. This is the second time in three weeks that Alize has beaten the 21-year-old Bianca, seeded fifth here. The Frenchwoman had won their second-round clash in Berlin a fortnight ago, going on to reach her first grass-court semi-final. Alize will meet the winner of the match between Greet Minner of Belgium and Alja Tomljanovic of Australia.

Sampras have achieved previously. In another match, seventh-seeded Italian Matteo Berrettini scored a 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, 6-0 victory over Guido Pella of Argentina in two hours and 16 minutes to advance to the second round. The 25-year-old Berrettini smashed 20 aces. Also winning was Kei Nishikori, who became only the 12th active player to record 100 Grand Slam match wins after he defeated Australian Alexei Popyrin 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 to enter the second round. However, 20th seed Aslan Karatsev, a rising star from Russia, crashed out in the first round after he lost to Jeremy Chardy 7-6(4), 7-6(6), 6-3.

MITTAL, ANJUM RECOMMENDED FOR RAJIV GANDHI KHEL RATNA



New Delhi World champion in double trap shooting, Ankur Mittal, and World Championships silver medalist in 10m air rifle, Anjum Moudgil, were on Wednesday recommended for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, the highest sporting honour in India. The two had also been recommended for the Khel Ratna last year. Mittal and Anjum had both won their medals at the 2018 World Championships in Changwon, South Korea. The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), the governing body for shooting sport in the country, also recommended world No. 1 in women's 10m air rifle, Elavenil Valarivan, world No. 1 in men's 10m air pistol, Abhishek Verma, and 50m pistol world champion, Om Prakash Mitherval, for the Arjuna Awards this year. However, the NRAI did not recommend any coach for the Dronacharya awards this year.

SA beat West Indies in final-over thriller

St. George's (Grenada) | Agencies
South African pace bowler Kagiso Rabada defended 15 runs in the final over, while Tabraiz Shamsi continued his sublime form with the ball to hand the visitors a one-run win against West Indies in the third T20 International here. With 15 runs needed off the final over, West Indies came very close as Fabian Allen hit the final ball for a six, but the hosts could not depend on the target of 167/8 in 20 overs and managed 166/7 to lose by a solitary run on Tuesday. The Proteas now lead the five-match series 2-1. The visitors have already won the two-match Test series 2-0. Andre Russell smashed three sixes in his 25, while Nicholas Pooran made 27 as they shared a sixth-wicket partnership of 46 in four overs. South Africa's bowling hero was Tabraiz Shamsi -- the left-arm chinaman -- who had figures of 2/13 in his four overs and earned the Player-of-the-Match award. Earlier, West Indies left-arm pace bowler Obed McCoy continued his impressive run of form as the 24-year-old took a career-best 4/22 off four overs to better the previous



best of 3/25 on Sunday (June 27). McCoy received good support from Dwayne Bravo, who took 3/25 off his four overs. They stemmed the flow of runs as West Indies looked to restrict the Proteas under 150 but Quinton de Kock made a huge impact with his 51-ball 72 and Rassie van der Dussen scored a 24-ball 32 to guide the visitors to a modest 167/8. **Brief scores** South Africa 167/8 in 20 overs (Q de Kock 72, R van der Dussen 32; O McCoy 4/22, D Bravo 3/25) beat West Indies 166/7 in 20 overs (E Lewis 27, N Pooran 26, A Russell 25; A Nortje 2/29, T Shamsi 2/13) by one run.

FIGHTING SPIRIT BEHIND INDIA HOCKEY TEAM'S RESURGENCE: HARDIK

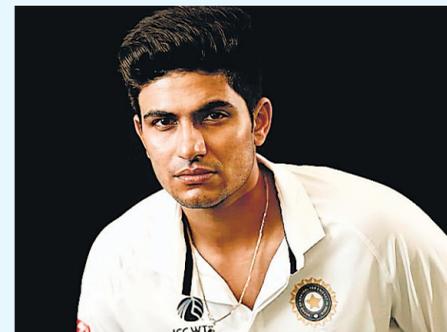


GILL LIKELY TO MISS FIRST TEST DUE TO LEG INJURY

London Indian Test team opener Shubman Gill is likely to miss the first Test of the five-match series against England due to injury in the lower part of his leg. The first Test begins in Nottingham on August 4, and the 21-year-old is fighting to get fit in time. "He might miss the first Test due to injury in lower part of his leg. But whether he will be available for the remainder of the series cannot be said right now," said an official aware of the development. Gill, who failed in the World Test Championship, having scored 28 and eight, has played only eight Test matches and averages 31.84. He has scored three half-centuries, including two in the India's victorious Test campaign in Australia. However, his failure in the WTC final has raised a few eyebrows, prompting the likes of former selector Gagan Khoda as saying that he should be pushed down to the middle-order instead of being allowed to open. India have reserve openers in Mayank Agarwal and KL Rahul, who can face the new ball with Rohit Sharma. They also have Bengal opener Abhimanyu Easwaran among standby players.

Bengaluru | Agencies

Men's hockey team midfielder Hardik Singh said on Wednesday that the "fighting spirit" built over the last few months was one of the key reasons for India's resurgence in the sport, and that the country now has a "very strong" bench strength as it prepares for the Olympics. Hardik, who is a part of the Tokyo Olympic Games-bound 16-member squad, said, "It now feels great to be a regular part of the team, well equipped in the midfield. There is a lot of competition for places in the



BIGGEST UPSETS OF EURO 2020 HAVE COME IN ROUND OF 16

FRANCE BEAT SWITZERLAND

The 2018 world champions were expected to win Euro 2020 and emulate what their predecessors did over two decades ago -- win World Cup and follow it up with Euro title. France, who had the talismanic Zinedine Zidane in their midst in those days, had won the 1998 FIFA World Cup and then followed it up with the Euro 2000 title. The current team, full of biggest stars of contemporary times, though expected to coast to title, fell at the Round of 16 stage against Switzerland. France are world No. 2 and Swiss are ranked 13th. After leading 3-1, the French conceded two late goals to let the Swiss take the game into extra-time and then to penalties where France's big star Kylian Mbappe missed a penalty.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Even though Euro 2020 tournament has entered only the quarter-final stage, some big nations have already fallen. At the biggest upsets of the tournament, all of which have come in the Round of 16 stage. In fact, half of the eight pre-quarterfinals sprang surprises.



CZECH REPUBLIC BEATS THE NETHERLANDS

The Dutch, who are 16th and 24 places above Czech Republic in FIFA rankings, had looked dominant throughout the league stage. They were one of the only three teams, besides Italy and Belgium, who entered the Round of 16 with an all-win record. However, the Oranje brigade was shocked 2-0 by the eastern European nation at their home in Amsterdam. Tomas Holes and Patrik Schick scored in the second half as they saw their team through to the quarter-finals.

BELGIUM BEAT PORTUGAL

It wouldn't come out as a surprise if FIFA rankings were considered. Belgium are the top-ranked team while Portugal, include the talismanic Cristiano Ronaldo, are No. 5. However, the fact that the Portuguese are the defending champions and their defeat surprised soccer fans. The title holders enjoyed 56 per cent ball possession and made 24 attempts, which was four times than their rivals. But they lacked efficiency, accuracy and also luck that could earn them victory. Thorgan Hazard, younger brother of ace Belgian footballer Eden, scored for the winners.

UKRAINE BEAT SWEDEN

Ukraine, who are ranked 24th, are six places below Sweden who are 18th and they qualified for Round of 16 as one of the third best-placed teams unlike the Swedes, who finished top of their pool. But the Ukrainians punched above their weight to first hold the Swedes in regulation time and then beat them in the dying minutes of extra time. This is Ukraine's first entry into the Euro quarter-finals. This is only the third time they are playing in the tournament. After failing to qualify for the 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008 editions, they competed in 2012 and 2016 but without much success.

Rasika Dugal's humorous take on World Social Media Day

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rasika Dugal has gone humorous on World Social Media Day. She took to social media on Wednesday with mid-week musings, giving tips on how to casually not pose for social media. "How To Casually Not Pose For Social Media In Three Easy Moves," she wrote as caption with three pictures she posted on Instagram.

In the images, Rasika sits casually in a black top and blue jeans against the backdrop of artworks on the walls of her home.

"Happy #WorldSocialMediaDay. Posted in admiration of people who have no idea about this day and in acknowledgment of my ambivalent relationship with social media. How would you define your relationship with it?" the actress asked in the caption. She used hashtags "#WorldSocialMediaDay #SocialMediaDay #SocialMedia #WednesdayThoughts #MidWeekMusings"

Rasika was recently seen in season two of "Out Of Love" directed by Oni Sen and co-starring Purab Kohli. She will be seen sharing screen space with Naseeruddin Shah in "The Miniaturist Of Junagadh". Incidentally, Shah also her teacher at Film and Television Institute of India (FTII).



Tamannaah Bhatia: My idea is to not let image take over work I want to do

Mumbai: Actress Tamannaah Bhatia has been acting for 16 years now. She has won a large fan base as one of the top glam queens of the South, and has also impressed as an actress of substance with select roles. She feels her idea is to not let any particular image dictate the kind of work she wants to do.

Tamannaah made her acting debut in 2005 at the age of 15 with the Hindi film "Chand Sa Roshan Chehra". The same year, she made her Telugu debut with "Sri" and the following year she made her Tamil debut with "Kedi".

"I have evolved as a person and at every different point of time. I have continuously worked, so for me, most of my life is divided into the films I have worked on. I enjoy it. For me, it is as new as it was on the first day," Tamannaah told IANS.

She feels the process of breaking an image has become challenging now.

"In fact, it is a lot more challenging now because I feel like there is a constant need of unlearning and you are making something that has already been created in terms of an image, and moving forward my idea is to not let an image take over the kind of work I want to do. I want the work to kind of precede that," she said.

Tamannaah, who was recently seen in the web-series "November Story" on Disney+ Hotstar VIP, is now gearing up for the Telugu remake of the Hindi thriller "Andhadhun". The Telugu version is directed by Merlapaka Gandhi.

Tanishaa Mukerji makes digital debut with "Life Is Short"

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Tanishaa Mukerji enters the digital space with the short film "Life Is Short". She took to Instagram on Wednesday afternoon to share a poster of the film that was released digitally. She wrote in the caption: "Suicide is its own pandemic & now in these covid times mental health is a very relevant issue! My short film in which I make my digital debut #lifeisshort directed by @vikramrazdan I play a delusional diva actress where This issue has been tackled It's very close to my heart & I hope you will all subscribe to @biggbangmedia @ 11rs a year and watch it!"

Directed by Vikram Razdan, Tanishaa plays the role of Debika, a schizophrenic superstar who has a dark and delusional character sketch.

"Life Is Short" has been screened at NFDC Film Bazaar and New Jersey Indian & International Film Festival (NJIIF). Kajol's younger sister Tanishaa has worked in films like "Neal n Nikki", "Sarkar" and "Sarkar Raa" among others. She was also a contestant in "Big Boss 7" and "Fear Factor: KhatronKeKhiladi 7".

'HUNGAMA 2' SET FOR OTT RELEASE ON JULY 23

Team Absolute | Mumbai

"Hungama 2" is all set for an OTT release on July 23 while the trailer of the Priyadarshan directorial, toplined by Paresh Rawal and Shilpa Shetty, drops on July 1.

Shilpa announced the news on Instagram sharing a poster of the film. "Can't keep calm, kyunki ab hoga Hungama! #DisneyPlusHotstarMultiplex #Hungama2 trailer coming out on July 1st on Disney+ Hotstar VIP! You don't want to miss this!" she wrote.

Rawal, too confirmed the date on Twitter: tweeted: "Get ready for double the Hungama! #DisneyPlusHotstarMultiplex #Hungama2 Trailer out on July 1st."

"IT'S OFFICIAL... #HUNGAMA2 TO PREMIERE ON DISNEY+ HOTSTAR... TRAILER TOMORROW... Director #Priyadarshan's next venture #Hungama2 - starring #PareshRawal, #ShilpaShettyKundra, #MeezaanJafri and #PranithaSubhash - premieres 23 July 2021 on #DisneyPlusHotstar," tweeted trade analyst Taran Adarsh.

"Hungama 2" marks Shilpa's comeback to Bollywood after a gap of 13 years. The film also stars Meezaan Jaffrey and Pranitha Subhash.



KUBBRA SAIT OPENS UP ON HER INTERNATIONAL SCI-FI SERIES 'FOUNDATION'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The trailer of Kubbra Sait's international web series "Foundation" dropped on Monday and the actress is not surprisingly excited. Kubbra apart, the sci-fi show has an international cast including Jared Harris, Lee Pace, Lou Llobell, Leah Harvey, Laura Birn, Cassian Bilton and Terrence Mann, with David S. Goyer as showrunner. "I am excited to be a part of Foundation and cannot wait to see the audiences reaction to the show. The trailer has dropped and it looks amazing. Rest all, don't want to share any spoilers apart from saying that I am very happy to be a part of it," said Kubbra, on being a part of the Apple TV show.

RANVEER SINGH SURPRISES WITH NEW FASHION EXPERIMENT IN LONG TRESSES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Ranveer Singh adds Italian flamboyance to his by-now familiar bizarre fashion sense in latest photos that he posted on Wednesday. Ranveer uploaded three back-to-back pictures donning a shiny sky-blue tracksuit and a huge gold necklace around his neck. He wears his hair long and sports oversized tinted glasses for the photo-op that has been shot indoors. The first picture is snapped near a bunker bed. While the second one has Ranveer in a Gucci monogram trench coat placed stylishly on his shoulder, as he holds a Black Jackie bag against a vintage mirror. The third picture is captured in front of an old elevator. The actor's latest style quirk draws inspiration from Gucci's Creative Director Alessandro Michele's signature long hair, chunky jewellery and signature red hat. "Alessandro, my beloved. @gucci @alessandro_michele #GucciBeloved #GucciJackie1961," Ranveer Singh captioned. Ranveer Kapoor's upcoming films are "83", "Jayeshbhaji Jordaar" and "Cirkus". He will also be seen in the Akshay Kumar-starrer "Sooryavanshi".



Munmun Dutta